

## **NMCB ONE CAT TEAM DONATES TIME AND EQUIPMENT TO RED CROSS**

By EO1(SCW) Joshua Turner

Seabees from NMCB ONE's Civic Action Team Palau recently demolished a burned building for the Red Cross, which eliminated a dangerous public safety hazard and saved the non-profit organization over \$50,000 in labor and equipment costs.

It started out like most evenings in Palau with a light Pacific breeze from the West that gently swayed the branches of the Beetle-Nut trees and the sky ablaze with another gorgeous sunset to mark the end of another day. As the sun dipped below the horizon, there was another, more ominous glow appearing in the night sky from downtown Koror. At approximately 6:55 p.m., a storage building owned by the Red Cross erupted in flame. The Palau Bureau of Public Safety was quick to respond with every means available to extinguish the inferno, but the massive flames consumed the building and its contents.

As the building still smoldered the next day, the Red Cross contacted Civic Action Team Officer-in-Charge LT Steve Lepper and asked the Seabees for assistance in demolishing the burned building. Several schools are located near the building in Koror, and the site presented a tempting, but hazardous, place for children to play. The remaining debris consisted mainly of lumber, tin roof sheets, and larger pieces of structural steel. The project was assigned to demolition experts EO1(SCW) Joshua Turner and EO2(SCW) Matthew Thibeault. After a short discussion, the Civic Action Team OIC arrived at the decision that this would provide the Team's Palauan apprentices with valuable experience in disaster recovery operations. The Civic Action Team Program donated the costs involved in the demolition effort to the Red Cross.

EO2 Thibeault spearheaded the effort, with labor provided by Equipment Operator Apprentices Alfred Twelbang and Oscar Ngiraibai, Builder Apprentices Valens Valentino and Roddy Blesam, as well as special assistance provided by SW1(SCW) Krall and Steelworker Apprentice Hailey Pedro who cut the larger pieces of structural steel into manageable sizes. A loader was used to scoop the debris, load it into a dump truck and haul it to the Koror Landfill.

The Seabees and their Apprentices worked quickly and safely to remove over 900 tons of twisted metal and debris from the site. The crew also recycled 300 pounds of copper wire and pipe, as well as 150 pounds of aluminum. EO2 Thibeault was quick to instill the basic fundamentals of disaster recovery along the way, while ensuring that safety was paramount. The valiant efforts and efficient teamwork involved in the project brought it to a successful completion two days ahead of schedule without any damage to personnel or equipment.

The Apprentices were quick to compliment Petty Officer Thibeault on his professionalism and his patience. EO Apprentice Alfred Twelbang said, “EO2 has taught us some great lessons that will help us in the future to become experts in our field like him and EO1.”



